BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC STATS

Service BC
Ministry of Management Services

Infoline

Contact: bcstats.infoline@gems6.gov.bc.ca *Issue: 05-06* *February 11, 2005*

- **The value of building permits issued in BC dropped 14.4% in December**
- **New housing prices in British Columbia's major cities increased significantly in December**
- **The value of BC origin exports rose 10.7% in 2004**

The Economy

- **BC exports fell 1.3% (*seasonally adjusted*) in December.** Solid growth in shipments of industrial and consumer products (+12.5%, led by metals and chemical products) was not enough to offset significant declines in exports of energy (-11.4%), machinery, equipment and automobiles (-6.1%) and agriculture and fish products (-10.7%). A 23.0% drop in shipments of energy products contributed to a 2.6% slump in shipments to the US in December.

  Data Source: BC Stats and Statistics Canada

- **Nationally, the value of exported goods increased 2.6% (*seasonally adjusted*) in December.** This was largely due to the healthy growth in exports to the United States (+3.6%, or $1.0 billion). However, as imports from US climbed nearly $1.5 billion, Canada's trade surplus with the US contracted to $8.8 billion.

  Canadian exports to Japan (-5.6%) and other OECD countries (-12.2%) were down significantly, while exports to the European Union (+3.1%) and other trading partners (+0.7%) were up in December. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **The value of building permits issued in BC dropped 14.4% (*seasonally adjusted*) in December, after strong growth in the previous month (+36.2%).** The decline was due to a significant slump in residential building permits (-24.8%), the deepest decline since July 2004. Non-residential permits posted robust 10.0% growth, although it still paled in comparison to November's 144.6% jump. This was due to a weaker market for industrial building permits (-62.2%).

  Permits in Vancouver slipped 1.3% while in Victoria, they grew sharply (+16.5%). However, permits plunged 70.0% in Abbotsford.

  Nationally, building permits were up 1.6%, boosted by the value of residential permits (+8.2%). The valued of building permits across Canada ranged from an increase of 183.7% in the Northwest Territories to a decrease of 96.1% in Nunavut. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Non-seasonally adjusted data from across the regions of BC shows that most parts of the province have seen growth in building permits compared to the same period last year.** The strongest growth in the value of permits was in the northern regions (+98.1%). There were also increases in the Mainland/Southwest (+9.3%), Vancouver Island/Coast (+10.1%) and Thompson/Okanagan (+16.0%) regions. The Kootenay (-10.5%) and Cariboo (-10.3%) regions of central BC posted declines compared to December 2003.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

Housing

- **New housing prices in British Columbia's major cities increased significantly in December 2004.** Prices in Victoria were up 6.8% compared to the same month in 2003. The housing price increase in Vancouver (+5.2%) matched the national average (+5.3%). The metropolitan area of St. Catharines-Niagara (+8.9%) had the highest housing price inflation.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **Housing starts in the province began the year on a lower note due to torrential rain and snow that hampered new construction activity.** Starts were down in all urban areas across the province in January compared to the same period last year, falling sharply in Victoria (-54.9%, *unadjusted*), Vancouver (-17.2%) and Kelowna (-67.6%). *Data Source: CMHC*

Report Summary of Federal Immigration Plan for 2005

Did you know...
Canadians eat more Kraft macaroni and cheese packaged dinners than any nationality in the world.

- **Housing starts across the country fell 13.8% (*seasonally adjusted at annual* rates) in January, compared to December.** Urban starts were down in all parts of the country from December last year, with BC and the Prairies sharing the distinction of the largest drops (-21.5%), followed by Ontario (-11.9%), the Atlantic region (-10.8%) and Quebec (-10.3%). *Data Source: CMHC*

- **New home construction in BC is forecasted to increase (+2.1%) in 2005 to 33,600 units and drop (-7.4%) to 31,100 units in 2006.** Multi-family starts are estimated to rise (+4.9%) this year to 19,800, due to gains in apartment construction, while single-detached construction should fall (-1.8%) to 13,800 units. Mortgage carrying costs are expected to rise in the next couple of years due to higher house prices as well as moderate increases in interest rates, particularly impacting single starts and first-time home buyers. Overall, in the next couple of years, the forecast numbers are moving toward levels that are more in line with demographics as well as with buyers' comfort levels. *Data Source: CMHC*

Child Care

- **In the last several years the use of daycare centres have become more popular as main care arrangements in BC.** In 2000/01, 20.5% of children were in day-care centres, compared to 12.9% in 1994/95. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

2004 in Review

- **After three consecutive years of decline, the value of BC origin exports turned the corner in 2004, rising 10.7% compared to 2003.** Rising commodity prices driven, at least in part, by demand for raw materials from China's burgeoning industrial sector, were responsible for much of the increase in the value of shipments.

  The effect of commodity price inflation is most visible with regard to BC exports of metallic mineral products, which climbed 36.5% from 2003 to 2004.

  The forest sector performed well in 2004, despite the burden of punishing duties of 27.2% on softwood lumber exports to the United States. Shipments of solid wood products increased 22.1%, while exports of pulp and paper grew 5.8%. *Data Source: Statistics Canada and BC Stats*

- **Canadian exports fared well in 2004, jumping 7.6% to $430.4 billion, led by energy and industrial products shipments.** Exports of every commodity group posted significant growth in 2004. Producers of industrial products (+16.6%) and energy products (+14.4%) saw particularly strong growth. Machinery & equipment (+3.6%) and automotive (+3.4%) products, the biggest groups in Canadian exports, both reported solid performances in 2004. Annual exports to the US amounted to $351.9 million in 2004, up 6.5% from 2003. Exports to the European Union (+12.4%) and other OECD countries (+12.2%) both showed double-digit increases. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **The value of building permits issued in BC amounted to $7.9 billion in 2004.** This represents a jump of 23.9% – the largest increase since 1991 and the fourth consecutive year of double-digit growth.

  The residential sector (+29.7%) was the leading factor in the construction boom. Growth in non-residential building permits (+10.0%) was more modest. Within the non-residential sector, growth in institutional and government sector building was mild (+1.4%). However, industrial (+34.4%) and commercial (+8.6%) building, showed much stronger growth. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **The value of building permits issued in most of the regions of BC was higher in 2004.** Only North Coast (-52.4%) posted a significant decline in the value of building permits in 2004. The value of permits rose substantially in Mainland/Southwest (+28.6%), Thompson/Okanagan (+24.5%), and Vancouver Island/Coast (+10.3%). In Greater Vancouver, the total value of annual building permits reached $4.8 billion – an increase of 31.7% over 2003. In contrast, Victoria (CRD) issued 5.9% fewer permits in 2004, valued at $534.6 million. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

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For data originating from Statistics Canada, data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the catalogue number.

Infoline Report

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Contact: Frank Ip (250) 387-0336
Originally published in *Immigration Highlights*, Issue 04-3. Annual Subscription $30 +GST

A Summary of the Federal Immigration Plan for 2005

As recently announced by the federal Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, the 2005 immigration planning levels range between 220,000 and 245,000 people. This level is similar to those set for 2004 and previous years.

Canadian immigration policies continue to aim at striking a balance between three major themes: family reunification, economic development and humanitarian/refugee admission. The planning levels set the upper range for the number of persons to be admitted under each of these three themes. Overall, economic immigrants will still represent the majority of landing with an upper range targeted at 148,000 people, whereas the family classes and refugee/designated classes are set at 56,800 and 40,200 persons, respectively. These figures include the principal applicants and their accompanying dependents. Also, these numbers relate to new permanent residents and do not include temporary residents such as international students, visitors, foreign workers, and refugee claimants living in Canada.

The majority of the economic immigrants to be admitted in 2005 will fall under the skilled worker classes. As noted by the Citizenship and Immigration Minister, in the past several years about 60 percent of immigrants who arrived Canada were economic immigrants, and immigrants accounted for the majority of labour force growth in the country. During the year 2003, a total of 51,686 economic immigrants were admitted to Canada and 88% (45,370) were under the skilled worker classes with the remainder being business immigrants and live-in care givers.

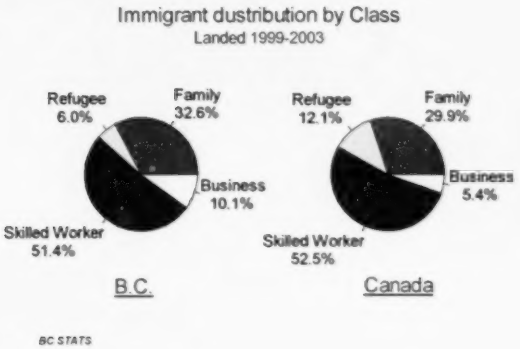
2005 Canada Immigration Levels - Target Ranges

Economic Class	**132,500-148,000**
Skilled Workers	112,500-124,500
Business Immigrants	9,500-10,500
Provincial Nominees	8,000-10,000
Live-in Care Givers	2,500-3,000
Family Class	**51,500-56,800**
Spouse, Partners & Children	46,000-50,000
Parent & Grandparents	5,500-6,800
Refugees and Designated Class	**36,000-40,200**
Total Permanent Residents	**220,000-245,000**

At the Canadian level, the distribution of the three main categories of immigrants represent 60.4% economic, 23.2% family and 16.4% refugee/designated according to the upper range of the new target. These numbers will also serve as indicators of the inflow of immigrants settling in British Columbia in the coming year. It has been observed that the province's share of the overall Canadian immigrants was around 15% in the past several years. If this share should prevail next year then one could estimate that the number of immigrants arriving in B.C. during 2005 will range from 33,000 to 36,750 persons.

However, the category distribution of immigrants settling in B.C. shows a different picture when compared to that of the overall landings in Canada. B.C. tends to attract a higher proportion of immigrants in the family class or business classes but a smaller proportion in the refugee/designated classes. The distribution of immigrants who landed in B.C. during the five year period 1999-2003 was 61.4% economic, 32.6% family and 6.0% humanitarian. B.C. also tends to receive a relatively higher proportion of business immigrants in its overall economic landings. During this five year period, more than 30% of the business immigrants arriving Canada chose to settle in B.C.

Since the newly announced 2005 planning levels are similar to those announced for 2004, the numbers and distribution of B.C. immigrants in the coming year is expected to be very similar to that observed in the past several years.



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TWO LOCATIONS! - PRINCE GEORGE & VANCOUVER

This workshop teaches the fundamentals of designing and implementing an effective satisfaction survey. The course material will assist researchers in producing respondent friendly questionnaires that result in useful and accurate survey data. The course will also help to provide an understanding of the importance of client and employee satisfaction in strategic decision making and business planning. The unique aspects of this type of survey enable you to determine your client's service expectations and their perceptions of your organization's performance.

Survey Planning

- Performance measures
- Client satisfaction vs. employee satisfaction
- Fundamentals of collecting data and maximizing response

Questionnaires

- Question structure; open and closed questions
- Rating scales
- Questionnaire design; wording, sequencing, and layout

Sampling Methods

- Probability vs. non-probability sampling
- Sample types and exit surveys
- The factors affecting sample size

Processing and Analysis

- The "drivers" of satisfaction
- Summarizing, graphing, and presenting survey findings

Register early!
Space is limited.

Regular Fee $550 + GST
Early Bird $500 + GST
Register 2 weeks before the workshop date

PRINCE GEORGE
February 15-16, 2005
8:30 am - 4:30 pm
Ramada Inn
444 George St
Prince George ☐

VANCOUVER
March 2-3, 2005
8:30 am - 4:30 pm
Room 201 Library Square
300 West Georgia St.
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Refreshments will be served throughout the day

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Refund Policy - Registrations are guaranteed once payment is received. Fees will be refunded, less $75 administrative charge, if written notice is received at least 3 business days prior to the workshop. Substitutions are permitted at any time. Group rates are also available.

Return form with payment to:

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BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Oct 1/04	% change on one year ago
BC	4,209.9	1.1
Canada	32,040.3	0.9
GDP and INCOME		
(BC - at market prices)	2003	% change on one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)*	145,550	5.2
GDP *($ 1997 millions)*	133,600	2.5
GDP *($ 1997 per Capita)*	32,175	1.6
Personal Disposable Income *($ 1997 per Capita)*	19,758	0.3
TRADE ($ millions, seasonally adjusted)		% change on prev. month
Manufacturing Shipments - Nov	3,632	1.2
Merchandise Exports - Dec	2,617	0.9
Retail Sales - Nov	3,964	-1.2
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		12-month avg
(all items - 1992=100)	Dec '04	% change
BC	123.5	2.0
Canada	125.4	1.8
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on
(seasonally adjusted)	Jan '05	prev. month
Labour Force - BC	2,237	0.4
Employed - BC	2,092	0.1
Unemployed - BC	145	4.7
		Dec '04
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	6.5	6.2
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	7.0	7.0
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Feb 9/05	Feb 11/04
Prime Business Rate	4.25	4.25
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	4.80	4.30
- 5 year	6.05	6.00
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Feb 9/05	Feb 11/04
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.2510	1.3179
US $ *(reciprocal of the closing rate)*	0.8001	0.7611
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE		% change on
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Jan '05	one year ago
BC	708.09	4.3
Canada	694.47	3.0

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate } Statistics Canada

Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bankofcanada.ca

Check it out!

Aboriginal Profiles

Statistical Profiles by College Region With Emphasis on Labour Market and Post-Secondary Education Issues

These profiles provide comparisons of the socio-economic conditions of the on-reserve and off-reserve aboriginal populations as well as the non-aboriginal population by College Region. Data are from the 1996 and 2001 Census, Statistics Canada.

http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/...

data/cen01/abor/ap_main.htm

Released this week by BC STATS

- Labour Force Statistics, January 2005
- Earnings & Employment Trends, January 2005
- Exports, December 2005

Next week

- Quarterly Regional Statistics, 4th Quarter 2004

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